

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05 EUR-12 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /099 W

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R 080505Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9545
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PFOR BM
SUBJ: JOINT WEEKA #16

1. NE WIN ON THE ROAD AGAIN (LOU)

WHILE GUB HAS YET TO ANNOUNCE IT, PRESIDENT NE WIN IS RELIABLY REPORTED TO BE ON A TOUR OF CENTRAL BURMA THIS WEEK. HE ALLEGEDLY IS VISITING MONYWA, SITE OF POTENTIAL COPPER MINING DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS MANDALAY AND PROME. ACCORDING TO BRITISH EMBOFF, NE WIN ALSO IS PLANNING A TRIP TO SWITZERLAND IN JUNE BUT HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION THAT HE WILL VISIT LONDON. A WIDELY RUMORED VISIT ABROAD, REPORTEDLY TO NEPAL, SET FOR THE END OF APRIL, WAS CANCELLED FOR UNKNOWN REASONS.

COMMENT: NE WIN'S CURRENT TOUR AT THE HEIGHT OF THE HOT SEASON, AND HIS CHEERFUL VIGOR AS HE BOARDED FLIGHT TO MANDALAY, TENDS TO BELIEVE WIDESPREAD REPORTS THAT HE RECENTLY SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK. IF IN FACT HE WAS BRIEFLY LAID UP WITH ILLNESS, IT WOULD
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APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN OF A MINOR NATURE.

2. BOMB EXPLOSION (LOU)

A SMALL BOMB REPORTEDLY DETONATED WITH TIMING DEVICE EXPLODED IN DOWNTOWN RANGOON IN ENTRANCE OF TOURIST BURMA OFFICES, NEXT TO DIPLOMATIC STORE, EARLY MORNING OF MAY 4. NO INJURIES OCCURRED AND DAMAGE WAS FAIRLY LIGHT. GUB PROBABLY BLAMES THE INCIDENT ON PPP TERRORISTS ALTHOUGH METHOD DIFFERS FROM USUAL PPP USE OF HAND GRENADES. IF TARGET WAS DELIBERATELY SELECTED BY THE PPP (AND NOT SIMPLY PICKED AT RANDOM BY ITS HIRED HENCHMEN) IT COULD BE DESIGNED TO SERVE AS A WARNING THAT TOURISM, WHICH EARNS FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR THE GUB, MAY BECOME A TARGET OF ATTACK.

3. KIDNAPPED GERMAN TECHNICIAN (LOU)

GUB AND GERMAN EMBASSY REMAIN SILENT ON STATUS OF KIDNAPPED FRG MINING TECHNICIAN GERT WINDHEIM (WEEK 14, ITEM 2). HOWEVER, GERMAN EMBASSY DID CONFIRM PRIVATELY NEGOTIATIONS WITH KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ARMY, WHICH HOLDS WINDHEIM, IN PROGRESS IN BANGKOK. UNDERSTAND GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED SAME THING IN BONN.

4. MFA SHIFTS (UNCL)

GUB HAS ANNOUNCED THAT U MAUNG MAUNG GYI, FORMER CHARGE IN KATHMANDU, WILL BECOME DIRECTOR GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT, FOREIGN MINISTRY. U SAW HLAING, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, BECOMES DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, NOMINALLY AT LEAST THE NUMBER THREE POSITION IN THE MINISTRY. ALSO ANNOUNCED WAS THE RETIREMENT OF AMBASSADOR WIN PE, BURMESE ENVOY TO ROME AND FREQUENTLY CHAIRMAN OF BURMESE DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN GENEVA.

COMMENT: THE ASSIGNMENT OF CAREER FSO'S TO SENIOR MFA POSITIONS IS SOMETHING OF A SHIFT. IN RECENT YEARS, CAREER OFFICERS IN DIRECTOR-GENERAL POSITIONS HAVE BEEN EASED OUT IN FAVOR OF EX-MILITARY APPOINTMENTS.

5. GUB PROTECTING KHMER, VIETNAMESE MISSIONS (LOU)

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GUB HAS TAKEN NO FURTHER ACTION TO RECOGNIZE GRUNK OR PRG, AND HAS INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT MEMBERS OF KHMER AND VIETNAMESE MISSIONS HERE WILL BE GIVEN "REASONABLE" TIME TO WIND UP THEIR AFFAIRS HERE AND LEAVE COUNTRY. FOLLOWING DRV TELEPHONE AND OTHER HARASSMENT OF REMAINING GVN CONGEN STAFF, THIS EMBASSY ASSISTED CONGEN IN DELIVERING LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTRY REQUESTING PROTECTION. GUB HAS STATIONED RELATIVELY CONSPICUOUS PLAINCLOTHES POLICE AT CONGEN OFFICE, AND THE HARASSMENT HAS CEASED.

6. DEPUTY FINANCE MINISTER RETURNS (UNCL)

DEPUTY PLANNING AND FINANCE MINISTER U CHIT MOUNG HAS RETURNED AFTER VISITING WASHINGTON FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH IBRD ON TELE-COMMUNICATIONS AND LIVESTOCK LOANS, AND MANILA FOR ADB GOVERNORS MEETING. CHIT MOUNG ALSO STOPPED FOR A DAY IN PARIS AND THREE IN LONDON. UNDERSTAND A BRITISH PRESS REPORT ASSERTED HE WAS TALKING WITH COMMERCIAL BANKS IN BOTH CITIES ABOUT FINANCING ONSHORE PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ESTIMATED AT 600 TO 800 MILLION POUNDS STERLING.

COMMENT: (LOU)

ALTHOUGH FIGURE PROBABLY INFLATED AND CERTAINLY BEYOND WHAT ANY PRUDENT BANKING CONSORTIUM WOULD LEND GUB, BURMA'S CAPITAL INVESTMENT NEEDS FOR OIL DEVELOPMENT ARE ENORMOUS AND COULD ULTIMATELY FORCE CONSIDERATION OF OPENING ONSHORE DEVELOPMENT TO PRIVATE PARTICIPATION. BRITISH EMBOFF CONFIRMED THAT WHILE IN LONDON CHIT MOUNG SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BANKS, INCLUDING ROTHSCHILDS. AT LEAST ONE U.S. BANK (CHASE MANHATTAN) HAS HAD SOME VERY PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH GUB ABOUT HELPING FINANCE A CHAUK-RANGOON PIPELINE.
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7 PETROLEUM NOTES (LOU)

THE EXXON RIG, DISCOVERER II, CURRENTLY DRILLING 110 MILES EAST OF TAVOY IN THE ANDAMAN SEA HAS NOW REACHED 11,000 FEET WITH ITS FIRST WELL. NO POSITIVE RESULTS HAVE BEEN FOUND; HOWEVER, EXXON INTENDS TO DRILL DEEPER TO DEVELOP BETTER GEOLOGICAL DATA ON THE AREA. TWO ALTERNATE SITES FOR THE SECOND TEST WELL ARE NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION.

TEST WELL FOR THE JAPANESE CONSORTIUM COMPLETED IN APRIL REACHED A DEPTH OF 8,500 FEET. EXTRAORDINAAAAARRY HEAVY PRESSURE WAS ENCOUNTERED, THREATENING A BLOWOUT AND FORCING A HALT TO DRILLING. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF A SIGNIFICANT PETROLEUM FIND, HOWEVER. JAPANESE DRILLING RIG WHITE DRAGON IS DUE IN JULY TO BEGIN DRILLING THE SECOND TEST WELL FOR THE CONSORTIUM.

BAY OF BENGAL CYCLONE PUSHED CITIES SERVICE RIG SLIGHTLY OFF SITE OF ITS FIRST WELL, AND WELL MIGHT HAVE TO BE ABANDONED. EXXON RIG WEATHERED STORM DESPITE SOME CONCERN, AND CYCLONE MOVED DIRECTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOWARD DRILLING RIG AT CFP'S FIRST TEST WELL. RIG HAS BEEN WHOLLY EVACUATED. PATH OF STORM HAS NOW VEERED TOWARD COAST AND CFP RIG PROBABLY NOT IN SERIOUS DANGER AT THE MOMENT.

8. READER'S DIGEST BANNED IN BURMA (LOU)

GUB HAS ABRUPTLY BANNED FURTHER IMPORTATION OF READER'S DIGEST, WHICH HAD ABOUT 5,000 SUBSCRIBERS IN BURMA. REASON UNSTATED BUT PROBABLY CONNECTED WITH AN ARTICLE CRITICAL OF REGIME IN LAST ISSUE TO BE DISTRIBUTED HERE; THE ARTICLE WAS SCISSORED OUT OF EACH COPY DISTRIBUTED.

COMMENT: (LOU) ACTION IS UNUSUAL; GUB HAS FREQUENTLY BANNED INDIVIDUAL ISSUES OF FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS BUT NORMALLY NOT OTHER ISSUES CONTAINING NOTHING OBJECTIONABLE ABOUT BURMA. IT MAY BE THAT THE READER'S DIGEST ARTICLE COINCIDED WITH NEW PRESSURES TO REDUCE STILL FURTHER THE HANDFUL OF FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS STILL DISTRIBUTED HERE, EITHER BECAUSE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE STRINGENCY OR TO PRESERVE CULTURAL "PURITY" OR BOTH.

9. PRESS COVERAGE OF VIET-NAM COLLAPSE (LOU)

AFTER FALL OF GVN A FEW EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES HAVE APPEARED IN BURMESE NEWSPAPERS. MAIN THEME IS THAT THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCIES ACHIEVED VICTORIES IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM BECAUSE OF

CESSION OF SOVEREIGNTY TO IMPERIALIST FOREIGN POWERS AND CAPITALISTS.
HOWEVER, IN COUNTRIES WHERE ANTI-IMPERIALIST NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC
PROGRAMS ARE LAUNCHED AND THERE IS NO MILITARY INTERFERENCE,
POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC CONTROL BY FOREIGN POWERS -- I.E., BURMA -
INSURGENCIES OF COMMUNISTS WILL END IN FAILURE. AUNG BALA (U
THOUNG) WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED TO HAVE SOMETHING ELSE IN MIND,
HOWEVER, WHEN HE COMMENTED ON THE FORCED DEPARTURES OF LON NOL AND
THEIU FROM OFFICE. WONDERING WHETHER THE TWO LEADERS HAD THE
INTERESTS OF THEIR COUNTRIES AT HEART, U THOUNG SAYS: "HAD THE
TWO STATE LEADERS OF CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM DEPENDED ON THE
PEOPLE FOR THAIR NATIONAL STRENGTH; SERVICED AND IDENTIFIED
THEMSELVES WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN
NO NECESSITY FOR THEM TO FLEE THEIR COUNTRIES." ASKED ABOUT THIS
COLUMN, U THOUNG REPLIED THAT HE "HAD TO WRITE IT" TO BALANCE
SOME OF HIS PREVIOUS CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE NE WIN REGIME.
HE DOES NOT RPT NOT DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM READING BETWEEN THE
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LINES TO FIND HIS THOUGHTS ON THE RELEVANCE TO BURMA, HOWEVER.
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